

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 215880

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT LUSAKA 2682 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO BONN
DAR ES SALAAM GABORONE LAGOS LONDON MAPUTO PARIS PRETORIA
OTTAWA USUN NEW YORK SEP 05.
QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 2682

EXDIS

E.O. 11652 XGDS-1

TAGS: PDEV RH NI US UK

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: CONVERSATION WITH OBASANJO

REF: DAR ES SALAAM 3608

1. GENERAL OBASANJO RECEIVED ME IN THE ZAMBIAN STATE
HOUSE LATE SUNDAY EVENING. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY
FOREIGN MINISTER GARBA AND THE NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR IN
ZAMBIA, IMMANUEL OBA.

2. I OPENED BY SAYING THAT ANDY YOUNG AND DICK MOOSE
HAD TOLD ME TO BE COMPLETELY FRANK WITH THE GENERAL AND
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I WAS THEREFORE PREPARED TO DISCUSS OUR VISIT TO THE
SOUTH IN AS MUCH DETAIL AS HE WISHED. OBASANJO SAID
THE THINGS HE WANTED TO KNOW WERE HOW WE PROPOSED TO
GET RID OF SMITH AND WHAT WAS THE REACTION IN
SOUTH AFRICA.

3. I STARTED WITH SOUTH AFRICA, SAYING THAT VORSTER SHOWED

CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN OUR PLAN BUT MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE DID NOT INTEND TO IMPOSE ANY PARTICULAR SOLUTION ON SMITH. HE ASSURED US, HOWEVER, THAT ONCE SMITH HAD MADE A DECISION, HE WOULD MAKE SURE THAT IT WAS CARRIED OUT. VORSTER AND BOTHA HAD BOTH STATED UNEQUIVACALLY THAT THEY PREFERRED A SOLUTION WHICH WAS INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE TO ANY OTHER. I NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT BOTH HE AND THE RHODESIANS WERE QUITE TAKEN ABACK BY THE PROPOSAL ON LAW AND ORDER.

4. I SAID OUR CONVERSATION IN SALISBURY WITH SMITH HAD BEEN DIFFICULT. HIS CHIEF CONCERN WAS WITH THE CONSTITUTION AND ITS VARIOUS PROVISIONS AS WELL AS WITH THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE PROPOSAL WAS BEING PUT TO HIM ON A TAKE-IT-OR-LEAVE-IT BASIS. HE WANTED TO KNOW WHICH OF THE PROVISIONS WERE NEGOTIABLE AND WHICH WERE FIXED. I ALSO NOTED THAT WE HAD MADE QUITE CLEAR TO BOTH MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE OUR OPPOSITION TO AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT AND THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH WE SAW AN ATTEMPT AT SUCH A SOLUTION WOULD ENCOUNTER (CONTINUATION OF WAR AND SANCTIONS, ABSENCE OF A DEVELOPMENT FUND) I SAID I HAD NOT YET SEEN THE FULL TEXT OF SMITH'S PRESS CONFERENCE. THOUGH I KNEW HE HAD BEEN NEGATIVE, I WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT HE HAD NOT REJECTED THE PROPOSAL. I NOTED THAT SITHOLE HAD APPARENTLY COME OUT WITH A STRONG STATEMENT REJECTING AN INTERNAL SOLUTION OR PARTICIPATION IN A SMITH GOVERNMENT. CONFIDENTIAL

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5. SO FAR AS GETTING RID OF SMITH WAS CONCERNED, WE HAD NO ILLUSIONS THAT THIS WAS GOING TO BE EASY. WE SAW OUR WHOLE INITIATIVE AS A PROCESS, PUBLICATION OF THE PROPOSAL WAS SIMPLY A POINT ALONG THE WAY. WE WOULD NOW PROCEED TO THE UN WHERE WE HOPED TO GET A REPRESENTATIVE APPOINTED TO PARTICIPATE IN CEASEFIRE TALKS TOGETHER WITH THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER DESIGNATE, AND COMMANDERS OF THE LIBERATION ARMY, AND RHODESIAN DEFENSE FORCES. IF SMITH REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE IN THESE TALKS, HE WOULD HAVE TO ANSWER BEFORE WORLD OPINION AND IF THAT ANSWER WAS NOT SATISFACTORY, AS I COULD HARDLY IMAGINE IT COULD BE, THEN WE RECOGNIZED THIS HELD IMPLICATIONS WITH REGARD TO STRENGTHENING SANCTIONS AGAINST RHODESIA AND THOSE SUPPORTING IT.

6. IN ORDER TO MOVE DOWN THIS ROAD, HOWEVER, I SAID WE WOULD OBVIOUSLY NEED SUPPORT OF THE AFRICANS IN THE UN. OBASANJO NODDED AND SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THIS AND WAS READY TO GO ALONG WITH US ON IT. I SAID THAT I HAD BEEN TALKING WITH JOSHUA KNOMO DURING THE AFTERNOON (SEPTEL) HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN JOKING BUT HE CERTAINLY DID NOT LEAD ME

TO BELIEVE THAT HE WOULD SUPPORT ACTION IN THE UN. HE HAD EVEN GONE SO FAR AS TO SAY THAT HE WOULD TRY TO "BLOCK" US IN THE UN. OBASANJO SAID NKOMO DIDNT KNOW WHAT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT. WE NEED HAVE NO CONCERN IN THAT REGARD.HE WOULD BE TALKING TO HIM LATER AND WOULD STRAIGHTEN HIM OUT. OBASANJO ASKED WHETHER WE COULD AVOID A FRENCH VETO IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL. I REPLIED THAT WE HAD BEEN CONSULTING WITH THE WESTERN MEMBERS OF THE SC AND BELIEVED THEY SUPPORT THE PROPOSAL.

7. I SAID THAT I THOUGHT WHILE SOUTH AFRICA MIGHT NOT BE PREPARED TO DICTATE A SOLUTION TO SMITH, IT WOULD PROBABLY PRESS HIM TO MAKE PROGRESS TOWARD AN EARLY SETTLEMENT OF SOME KIND. I THEREFORE FELT THAT SMITH'S DISASSOCIATION
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FROM AN INTERNAL OPTION WAS IMPORTANT AND ENCOURAGING. IF SMITH WAS BLOCKED FROM GOING IN THIS DIRECTION, HE WOULD BE FORCED SOONER OR LATER TO ACCEPT OUR PROPOSAL. OBASANJO THANKED ME FOR BRIEFING HIM AND THE CONVERSATION ENDED.

8. COMMENT: OBASANJO'S OPENING QUESTION WAS THE SAME ONE ASKED TO THE BRITISH HICOM MILES AND ME YESTERDAY BY FORMIN MWALE. THIS IS THE QUESTION WHICH THE ZAMBIANS (AND MOZAMBIANS TOO) HAVE CONSTANTLY PUT TO US. THEY ASK HOW WE PLAN TO GET RID OF SMITH, AND WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OUR PROPOSAL AND ALL THE OTHERS WHICH FAILED BEFORE. IT IS A VERY DIFFICULT KIND OF PREOCCUPATION FROM THAT OF NYERERE'S WITH THE QUESTION OF WHO IS TO CONTROL THE ARMED FORCES DURING THE TRANSITION AND INDEPENDENCE PERIOD. HAVING RECEIVED SATISFACTION ON NYERERE'S CONCERNS I BELIEVE THE AFRICANS WILL NOW TURN TO PRESS US ON HOW WE PLAN TO GET RID OF SMITH AS THE ZAMBIANS WANTED TO DO ALL ALONG. THEY SEEM TO HAVE IMPRESSED OBASANJO WITH THIS POINT. DURING OUR DISCUSSION OF ANOTHER SUBJECT (SEPTIL) HE HAD REFERRED TO PLANS HE HAD JUST BEEN TALKING TO THE ZAMBIANS ABOUT, WHICH WOULD BE PUSHED THROUGH DURING THE NEXT MONTH OR TWO. MY GUESS IS THAT THEY WERE DISCUSSING ACTION IN THE UN, THOUGH I HAVE NOTHING FURTHER ON WHICH TO BASE SUCH AN ASSUMPTION. IN ANY CASE, IT IS QUITE CLEAR THAT THE AFRICANS WILL NOW BE LOOKING TO US TO DELIVER SMITH IN ACCORDANCE WITH OUR PROPOSAL, THE PROVISIONS OF WHICH THEY SEEM GENERALLY TO ACCEPT.

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